



D. A Signature Waterfront Park

Planning Principles: *Design, restoration and reclamation of the Poplar Point waterfront should result in a landscape of memorable beauty and environmental sensitivity. This park should be a jewel in the family of parks, gardens, trails, and gathering spaces along the Anacostia River.*

The all-new Poplar Point Park, as the southern anchor of Anacostia Park, will introduce a new generation of great open spaces on the River. While continuing its traditional role as a place of community respite on the waterfront, the park will add a restored wetland environment, ornamental and community gardens, gracious green rolling lawns, an outdoor amphitheater, an orientation center, water taxi stops and educational, cultural and visitor service facilities. It will link to the River, and reach into the Historic Anacostia community with green fingers of park and landscape.

1 A Walk Through the Park

We have just arrived at the Anacostia Metro Station on our first visit to the new park at Poplar Point. We follow signs directing us to the Park exit and emerge into the light and airy lobby of a redesigned structure – the only station in the District within the boundaries of Anacostia Park. Through glass doors we can see the open expanse outside but our attention is caught by the Park Visitor Orientation Center.

At the Orientation Center we browse through information about the Anacostia Park System as well as the neighborhoods nearby. We learn about the Anacostia Riverwalk and Trail that continuously loops around both sides of the River. We discover that we can rent bikes round the corner and return it anywhere in the Park system. We read about the memorial garden and Museum outside. We pick up a schedule of events planned for the outdoor amphitheater. We find that we can get lunch at the many local restaurants on MLK Avenue. We learn about the newly restored Stickfoot Creek and wetlands and decide to walk through the park for a

closer look. On our way out, we pick up a self-guided walking tour map to Frederick Douglass House and the Anacostia Museum.

We step out of the station into a landscaped plaza to views of the River and the monuments of Washington DC in the horizon. To our left is a vibrant new mixed-use community. Attractive new buildings with retail or small offices on the ground floor and residences above occupy the private land along Howard Road. As we walk out towards the Park we see the creek to our right. A landscaped path takes us towards the shoreline. At points, the path becomes a boardwalk and we stop to look at the wetland flora beneath. Signs explain the environmental role of the wetlands and the history of the land.

We are now on the Anacostia Trail at the Point, the tip of the Park. A new Museum at the Point overlooks the water. It's not open yet so we continue walking east on the Trail. We turn back to the city and see the crescent shape of Anacostia Drive framing the park. We are now at the crossing of W Street and the Trail. A small water taxi is parked at a landing waiting for the last few passengers to climb in. A sign points us down W Street to Frederick Douglass Garden and House so we set off. We exit the Park and find ourselves on a tree-lined street leading into the community. We read that there is a shuttle back to the Park from Frederick Douglass House. We'll be back in a couple of hours just in time for the noon-time concert at the amphitheatre!

2 Park Program

The park at Poplar Point is part of the Anacostia River Park System. With its key location as a western gateway to the system, it plays a very important role at a District and regional level. However, it is also a significant part of Historic Anacostia and must function to serve the local community as well. Keeping this in mind, the program for Poplar Point includes a variety of uses including system-

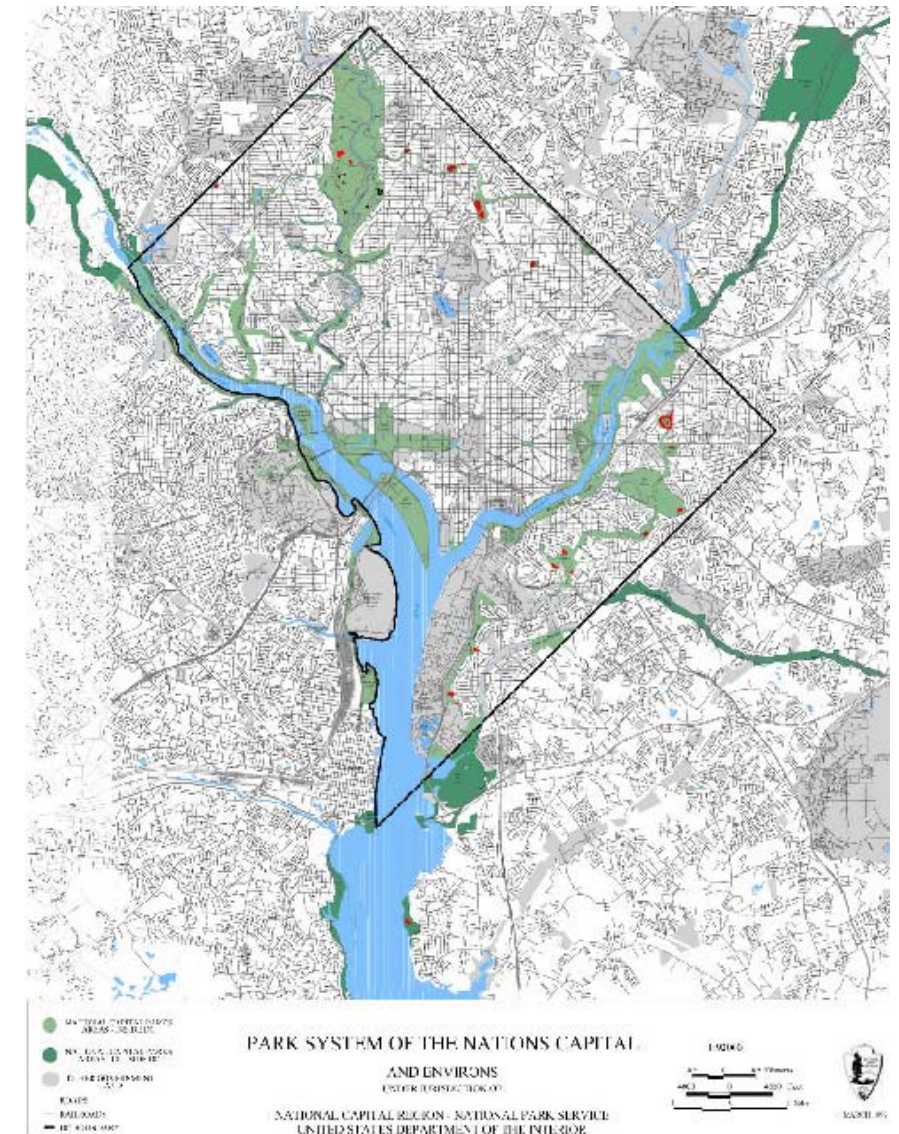


Figure 40: Poplar Point Park is part of the Anacostia River Park System



Figure 41: Memorials are planned as destinations in Poplar Point

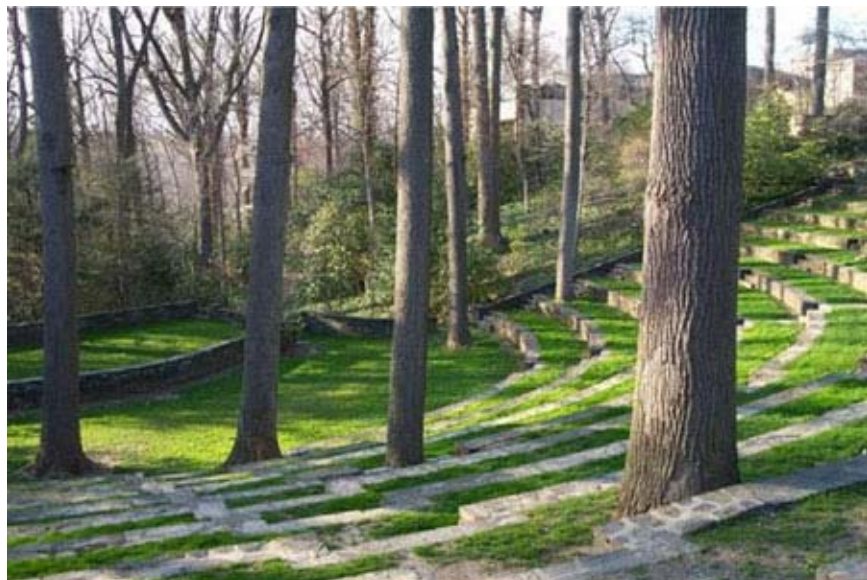


Figure 42: Public gathering places such as amphitheatres are envisioned at Poplar Point

wide trails, wetland areas, gardens, active and passive recreation, and cultural and community facilities.

Recapture of lands at Poplar Point for public use will provide more than enough area for the diversity of program activities identified in community and agency working sessions. Over the next few years, new lands will become available as the site is remediated and natural areas re-created, as Park Service facilities are located to less sensitive sites such as those surrounding the Park, and as long-term transportation initiatives are realized to extend 295 across the river to South Capitol Street and replace the Frederick Douglass Bridge.

Though a comprehensive park program will be the subject of extensive analysis at the next stage of design – working with agencies and community constituencies – the components recommended for consideration in the preferred park concept include:

Visitor Amenities

To service visitors to the Park, a number of amenities are planned for Poplar Point. These will include the following:

- An NPS Visitor and Orientation Center in conjunction with the Metro station. The Visitor Center is expected to provide information about the Anacostia River Park System as well as local attractions. It can also serve as a trailhead for the Park.
- Multi-modal transit including an improved Metro station, shuttles, pedestrian paths, bike routes, circulator buses and a potential link to a future water taxi facility. The improved Metro station can serve as a hub, also linking with the WMATA parking garage.
- Water taxi landings at three potential locations as shown in the site plan.
- Small-scale neighborhood-serving retail and services including cafes, restaurants, and bike rentals. Retail at Poplar Point must serve visitors as well as local residents and must be compatible with businesses on MLK Avenue.

- Streetscape and site furniture such as benches, signage, and lighting all through the Park as well as along key streets that lead into the community including W Street, Howard Road, and Good Hope Road.
- Publicly accessible recreational amenities such as playing fields and picnic areas for use by Park visitors as well as local residents.
- An outdoor amphitheater, museums, gardens, and other cultural facilities.

Pedestrian and Bike Trails

The Anacostia Riverwalk and Trail, designed along both sides of the River will link Poplar Point with the rest of Anacostia Park and the region. While the exact alignment and width of the Riverwalk will be determined as part of the Anacostia Riverwalk and Trail design process, it is likely to follow the shoreline at Poplar Point, going around the Point and perhaps over the redesigned Frederick Douglass Bridge to link with the Trail on west bank of the River. The CSX Rail corridor is also under consideration for conversion into a dedicated bike trail. Feeder trails, walking paths, and improved sidewalk along community streets will lead to the Riverwalk and encourage walking to and within the Park.

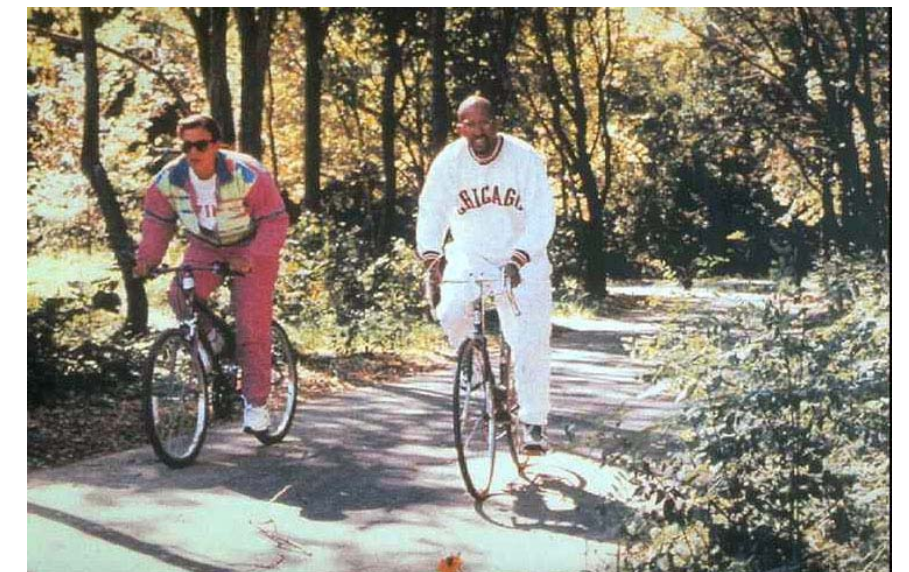


Figure 43: Poplar Point will accommodate pedestrian and bike trails



Creek, Wetlands, and Habitat Areas

The daylighting of Stickfoot Creek and rehabilitation of wetlands is a major element of the plan. The preferred alignment for the restored Creek will be through the center of the Park, right along the alignment of the current Stickfoot sewer. The flow from the Creek will be filtered through a series of contained and tidal wetlands. These will include some existing wetlands as well as new wetlands, resulting in an approximately 2:1 increase in wetland area. Native riparian vegetation will be planted to enhance the habitat potential of the wetlands. The wetland areas may be accessible through boardwalks with opportunities for environmental educational exhibits.

Riparian vegetation will also be introduced along the length of the shoreline within a 150' buffer except in locations where waterfront uses such as a water taxi landing may be designed.

Active and Passive Recreation Areas

Anacostia Park as a whole is a prime recreational destination for the District providing opportunities for sports, athletics, and biking. Poplar Point being in close proximity to the Anacostia neighborhoods is a natural venue for recreational amenities. The northeast end of the Park has been identified as having the greatest potential to accommodate playing fields as well as a modest indoor recreation building. Other recreational amenities such as a boat launch for kayaking and canoeing are also envisioned, potentially at the southern end of the Park.

The Park will have numerous opportunities for passive recreation such as walking, strolling, sitting, taking in the views, and people watching. Lawn areas, outdoor benches, trees, and street furniture will be designed to promote use by all groups.



Figure 44: Before and after image of a creek restoration project

